

Petersburg National Battlefield VirtualCache Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Site 10: Fort Fisher

N 37° 13'5.534
W 77° 22'12.904



After the Battle of Peebles Farm the Union forces constructed Fort Fisher. The original one was much smaller than what you now see. It's expansion in March 1865 made it the largest fortification built during the Petersburg Campaign. The actual description of Fort Fisher is described as follows:

Fort Fisher was a four-bastioned fort built on a rectangular trace (western face slightly inclined) with positions for 19 field guns, 4 mounted *en barbette* in the bastion salients, 15 firing through embrasures; length of parapet 582 meters, average relief 4.6 meters, average width 7.3 meters; three magazines--in traverse of northwest bastion, in traverse of northeast bastion, and in central traverse; length of central traverse 54 meters; outer ditch perimeter 675 meters, enclosing 17,228 square meters (4.3 acres); estimated 10,973 cubic meters excavated, requiring 2,058 labor days; prescribed garrison 300 men. The fort was occupied at various times by Battery D Pennsylvania Artillery, 27th New York Battery, Batteries C & I of 5th US Artillery with four light 12-pounders (new fort), 9th New York Artillery (new fort); garrisoned at various times by detachments of 45th Pennsylvania Infantry, 31st Maine Infantry, 26th Michigan Infantry, and 116th Pennsylvania infantry (new fort).

It was from in front of this fort that the Union VI Corps assaulted and seized Confederate rifle pits on March 25, 1865. This ground was valuable in the eventual breakthrough of Lee's defenses at Petersburg. In the pre-dawn hours of April 2, 1865 a signal blast from the cannon in the northwest corner of this fort sent the VI Corps forward once again. This time from their newly captured lines the Union troops were able to overwhelm the Confederate defenders. By late that day Lee was pulling out of Petersburg and Richmond.

Visit Instructions: What historical event happened at Fort Fisher. The answer can be found on the wayside sign near the fort.